

AMBROSE PARÉ

It was only yesterday on time's eternal calendar that physicians were arguing about whether the infection following gunshot wounds of war was caused by poison from the lead bullets or by the burned gunpowder. These wounds were treated by pouring boiling oil into them.

Then God gave to the world another great pioneer thinker and leader; one of the great surgeons of all times—Ambrose Pare. He demonstrated the startling fact when only 26 years that it was not necessary to pour boiling oil in wounds. Pare himself relates his accidental observation that men whose gunshot wounds had to be dressed with "a digestive made of the yolke of an egg, oyle of roses and turpentine" suffered less than the others dressed before the boiling oil ran out. Pare's kindness was shown in the anxiety these patients caused him. "I could not sleep all that night, for I was troubled in minde, and the dressing of the precedent day (which I judged unfit) troubled my thoughts; and I feared that the next day I should finde them dead, or at the point of death by the poyson of the wound, whom I had not dressed with the scalding oyle. Therefore I rose early in the morning, I visited my patients, and beyond expectation, I found such as I had dressed with the digestive onely, free from vehemencie of paine, to have had good rest, and that their wounds were not inflamed, nor tymified; but on the contrary the others that were burnt with the scalding oyle were feaverish, tormented with much paine, and the parts about their wounds were swolne." Pare's shrewdness is shown by his immediate drawing the conclusion that "difficulty of curing proceeds not from the venenate quality of the wounds, nor the combustion made by the gunpowder, but the foulness of the patients bodies, and the unreasonableness of the aire."

Pare lived 900 years ago, and his memory is still green in the hearts of all lovers of the medical sciences.



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Medicine in the Public Press

A Sample of What One Newspaper Is Telling Its Readers Through an Alleged Health Column—"Why, then, is surgery so generally recommended for cancer? There are two reasons. First, it is in line with the immemorial custom of medical practice to suppress and remove symptoms, instead of going after causes, and, secondly, cancer surgery is perhaps the most lucrative branch of the profession since appendectomy declined somewhat in popularity."

Our Father in Heaven forgive them for they know not what they do.

"It's Easy to Keep Fit," says Walter Camp (Collier's) in a recent article under this title. But before the advice could be published, the author had joined those of the great beyond."

Making a fetish of exercise is no more conducive to longevity than is plowing corn or hoeing potatoes.

Which Is Equivalent to Saying What?—Doctor Alexis Carrel is quoted as saying that "the development of a new psychology is our only hope of improving the quality of human beings."

"Health First"—In a column under this heading, we read in the San Francisco Daily News that "It is an authentic fact, which no medical denial or camouflaging can wipe out, that in the 'flu' epidemic of 1918-19, every drugless healing cult in the business proved itself more efficient in caring for their patients—and with a lower mortality rate—than the regular medical school."

Itinerant Psychologists in Action—Another of these recently completed a series of "free" lectures in San Francisco. According to a newspaper this "erudite healer" made quite a hit with two large charts which "prove conclusively that two people with protruding chins shouldn't marry. When they kiss, their chins will strike, and then look out for the fireworks! Two people with long noses shouldn't mate—their beaks will get all messed up with each other."

How Big Medicine Works—In the recently published letters of Franklin K. Lane, that distinguished Californian telling of his experiences at a large clinic says:

"I am being ground and wound and twisted and fed into and out of the Mayo mill, and a great mill it is. Of course, they are giving me a private view, so to speak. Distinguished consideration is a modest word for the way in which I am treated—not because of my worth, but because of my friends. Those men are greater as organizers, I believe, than as workmen, which is saying much indeed, for they are the surgeons supreme. . . . Two or three hundred people, new people, a day pass through (their shop). Sixty to seventy thousand a year received, examined, diagnosed, treated perhaps, operated on (50 per cent) and cared for. The machinery for this is colossal and superbly arranged.

"Dr. Mayo told me to come over at 2 o'clock and register. . . . I stood in line and was duly registered, telling name and other such facts, non-medical. Then a special guide took me to Dr. Mayo, who had already heard my story at the hotel but who wished it in writing. Accordingly, I was presented to a group of the staff and one man assigned as my escort. I answered him a thousand questions, touching my physical life for fifty-six years. Then to the tonsil man, who saw a different 'focus,' now and there, a focus in the tonsils! Nose and ears without focus or foci or focuses. Down an elevator, through a labyrinth of halls, down an inclined plane, up a flight of steps, two turns to the left, and then a group of the grumpiest girls I ever saw or heard or felt. They were good looking, too, but they didn't care to win favor